

Claims:

1 - 81 (Cancelled)

82. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for electrostatically applying a powder material to substrates, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of platens arranged to move along an endless path, each platen being arranged to hold a plurality of substrates;

~~driving~~ means for driving the platens along the endless path;

an applicator assembly for applying the powder material to the substrates, the applicator assembly being located on a part of the endless path; and

a transfer station for transferring the substrates between said plurality of platens.

83. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 82 wherein the applicator assembly comprises at least one applicator having a supply of powder material and ~~charging~~ means for electrostatically charging the powder material.

84. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 83 wherein a portion of the applicator is replaceable by a user, the replaceable portion including the supply of powder material.

85. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 82 further including a fusing assembly for fusing powder material electrostatically applied to the substrates, the fusing assembly being located on a part of the endless path.

86. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 85 wherein the fusing assembly comprises a plurality of fusing devices disposed in series along the endless path.

87. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 82 further including a loading station for loading substrates onto the platens.
88. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 82 further including an unloading station for removing substrates from the platens.
89. (Cancelled)
90. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 82 further including at least one detector for inspecting the platens.
91. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 90 wherein the at least one detector comprises a plurality of optic fibres.
92. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 90 wherein the at least one detector comprises a camera.
93. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 90 wherein the detector is remotely operable.
94. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 82 wherein the driving means is arranged to drive the platens along the endless path at a plurality of speeds.
95. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 82 wherein each of said platens is independently drivable by said driving means.
96. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 82 further including a remote controller arranged to control the motion of the said platens.
97. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 96 wherein said remote

controller communicates with at least some of said platens via a wireless link.

98. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 82 wherein the endless path is substantially horizontal.

99. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 98 further including a vertical partition separating the driving means from the platens, the driving means being located in a non-product region and the platens being located in a product region.

100. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 99 further including a second vertical partition separating the non-product region from the product region, the first and second vertical partitions defining a substantially annular chamber between the non-product region and the product region.

101. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 100 wherein the substantially annular chamber includes an air flow in the vertical direction.

102. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 98 wherein the platens are arranged to move along the endless path in pairs, one of the platens in the pair being located above the other platen in the pair.

103. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 102 wherein the platens in each pair are movable with respect to one another in the vertical direction.

104. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 102 wherein the applicator assembly for applying the powder material to the substrates comprises at least one upper applicator for applying the powder material to substrates in the upper platen and at least one lower applicator for applying the powder material to substrates in the lower platen.

105. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 104 wherein the upper and lower applicators are arranged to supply powder material to the substrates substantially simultaneously.

106. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 104 wherein the upper and lower applicators are arranged to supply powder material to the substrates sequentially.

107. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 102 further including a fusing assembly comprising an upper fuser for fusing powder material electrostatically applied to the substrates in the upper platen and a lower fuser for fusing powder material electrostatically applied to the substrates in the lower platen.

108. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 107 wherein the upper and lower fusers are arranged to fuse powder material on the substrates substantially simultaneously.

109. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 102 further including a transfer station for transferring substrates from the upper platen to the lower platen.

110. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 109 wherein the transfer station is arranged to move the platens relative to one another in the vertical direction such that a face of the lower platen is adjacent a face of the upper platen, the face of the upper platen holding a plurality of substrates, to shift the plurality of substrates from the face of the upper platen to the adjacent face of the lower platen and to separate the adjacent faces of the upper and lower platens.

111. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 109 wherein the transfer station includes at least one vibrator for vibrating one or both platens.

112. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 102 wherein powder is applied to a first portion of said substrates when said substrates are in the upper platen and wherein powder is applied to a second portion of said substrates when said substrates are in the lower platen, said second portion being on the opposite side of said substrates to said first portion.

113. (Previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 82 wherein said plurality of platens are fixed to move along the endless path.

Claims 114 - 162 (Cancelled)